



SUTTON DINGHY CLUB – COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Club acknowledges that for the vast majority of members, complaints never arise. The following procedure however, is set out to ensure that on the exceptional occasions when a Complaint does arise, it is exercised in a fair and reasonable manner.

Informal Approach

While in no way diminishing the nature of any complaint, an informal approach can often resolve matters. As a general rule therefore, an attempt should be made to address the complaint as soon as possible by means of an informal approach.

- 1) Any Member who believes he/she has a reason for complaint should explain clearly to the person complained of, the nature of their complaint. In circumstances where the complainant finds it difficult to approach the other person, he or she should seek help and advice from a member of the General Committee.
- 2) The committee member should discuss the various options open in an effort to resolve the issue informally.
- 3) Having consulted the committee member, the complainant may request the assistance of the committee member in raising the issue with the person complained of. In this situation the committee member should have a non-confrontational discussion with a view to resolving the issue in an informal, low key manner.
- 4) A complainant may decide, for whatever reason, to bypass the informal procedure. In such a case the following formal procedure will be invoked.

Formal Procedure

If an informal approach is inappropriate or if after the informal stage, the complaint is still an issue, then the following formal procedure should be invoked.

- a) The complainant should make a formal complaint in writing to the Hon. Secretary. The complaint should be confined to the precise details of the incident.
- b) The Hon. Secretary will raise the matter for discussion at the next meeting of the General Committee.
- c) If, after discussion, the General Committee believes there is no case to answer the Hon. Secretary will respond to the complainant and provide feedback and the reasons that no further action is being taken.
- d) If the General Committee has insufficient information to establish whether or not a case is warranted, it may request that a specially convened Sub-committee completes a review and makes a recommendation to the General Committee. Again the recommendation may be that there is no case to answer. If so, the Hon. Secretary will respond to the complainant and provide feedback and the reasons that no further action is being taken.

- e) If the General Committee believes there is a case to be answered it may request that the complaint be dealt with by a specially convened Sub-committee.
- f) The Complaints Sub-committee will forward the letter of complaint to the person complained of, along with a letter outlining this procedure.
- g) Both the complainant and the person complained of will be notified of the members of the Complaints Sub-Committee and will have the right to object to any member, in which case a replacement will be found.
- h) In the first instance, the complainant is interviewed to get greater detail, and this interview is will be minuted / recorded.
- i) The complainant may invite witnesses to be interviewed and these interviews are also minuted.
- j) A copy of these minutes is forwarded to the person complained of.
- k) An interview is then arranged with the person complained of and they are also invited to bring witnesses. These interviews will be minuted /recorded.
- l) The complainant may also be invited to attend and his/her requirement to attend is at the discretion of the person complained of.
- m) The Complaints Sub-Committee will question those attending.
- n) Following this hearing, the Complaints Sub-Committee may convene a further meeting if further information is required or any clarifications needed.
- o) Following any hearing/s, the Complaints Sub-Committee will then decide on a proposed course of action and make their recommendation to the General Committee.
- p) The General Committee will then discuss and decide on what, if any, action should be taken. This could include a request for an apology, but may, depending on the nature of the complaint, go as far as suspension or expulsion. Both parties will be informed of the outcome in writing by the Hon Secretary.
- q) The person complained of will have a right of appeal to the Commodore who may enlist external parties to further decide on the issue.
- r) If at any stage in the investigation of a complaint, allegations are made which are found to be unsubstantiated, a full retraction AND apology must be made to individuals concerned, otherwise the complainant will be deemed in breach of Club Code of Conduct and will face disciplinary action.